

R E M A R K S

In the Office Action claims 9 and 10 were said to have allowable subject matter. The specification was objected to because the abstract exceeds 150 words in length. The abstract has been corrected to meet this requirement. Claims 1, 2, and 8 were objected to because of informalities, as stated in the Office Action, and have been amended to correct the informalities. Claims 1-10 were rejected under 35 USC 112 second paragraph for the reasons stated in the Office Action. Claims 2-4 and 6-9 depend from rejected claims and were likewise rejected. Claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 USC 102 for being anticipated by Mitsui et al (GB 2295642 A) for the reasons stated in the Office Action. Claims 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mitsui et al (GB 2295642 A) in view of Wegner (US Pat. No. 6116664).

The claims have been amended to overcome the rejections under 35 USC 102, 103 and 112, and are believed to be allowable in view of the following argument. Reconsideration of the rejections is requested in view of the amendments and argument herein. Claim 9 has been rewritten in independent form including amendment for clarity to overcome the rejection under 35 USC 112, thereby to secure allowance of claim 9 and its dependent claim 10.

It is an object of the present invention to improve an operating arrangement for sliding doors of vehicles in a way that enables operation of a latching device with the aid of door handles with lower tolerances. A latching device 16 is provided to arrest the

sliding door in a positive-locking manner in its open position. An additional door lock 14 is formed integrally with a control mechanism for realization of the different logical functions.

With respect to the teaching of Mitsui et al (GB 2 295 642 A), there is only shown an operating arrangement for a sliding door of a motor vehicle having a door lock 8 for locking the door in its closed position and a separate control mechanism 9.

Therefore, this reference discloses a control mechanism and a door lock which are not formed integrally at one end of a sliding door, and are separated with the control mechanism being located close to the door handles.

Mitsui et al do not disclose any latching device holding the door in its open position. If one would use the Mitsui latching device in a sliding door, then the resulting arrangement would represent the state of the art as mentioned in the last paragraph on page 1 of the present specification; accordingly, the operating means would not act directly on the latching device, but would act via the control mechanism which would be connected in-between. In such an arrangement with a control mechanism being located close to the door handles, there is no necessity to deviate from the foregoing known arrangement since there will be no extensive distances with resultant cumulative tolerances that might impede opening of the latching device.

Therefore, in view of the missing latching device, in Mitsui, for arresting in a positive locking manner and for holding the sliding door in its closed position, Mitsui et al clearly does

not anticipate claims 1 to 6. In view of the separate arrangement of the door lock and the control mechanism, Mitsui et al represents a well-known state of the art that is distinguishable from the present claims which, accordingly should be allowable over the cited art in view of the foregoing argument.

A typographical error was noted on page 6 of the specification wherein the numeral 28 has been used to identify a housing and a Bowden cable. The error is corrected by using the numeral 29 to identify the housing. A corresponding correction is provided on Figs. 2-5 of the drawing.

As shown in an accompanying Request for Drawing Correction Approval, it is proposed to correct Figs. 2-5, as shown in red ink on a copy of the drawing figures to change the numeral 28 to 29 for identification of a housing.

A new claim 11 is presented for further definition of the invention. Claim 11 is similar to claim 1, but specifies that the door lock secures the door in the closed position of the door while the latching device holds the door in the open position of the door. The cited art does not disclose lock and latching means for securing a sliding door in both closed and open position of the door. Accordingly, claim 11 is believed to be allowable.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached pages are captioned "Version with markings to Show Changes Made."

In the event there are further issues remaining the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone attorney to reach agreement to expedite issuance of this application.

Since the present claims set forth the present invention patentably and distinctly, and are believed to be distinguishable over the art either taken alone or in combination, this amendment is believed to place this case in condition for allowance and the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the matter, enter this amendment, and to allow all of the claims in this case.

Respectfully submitted,
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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING UNDER 37 CFR SECTION 1.8(a)

I hereby certify that the accompanying Amendment, Abstract and Request for Drawing Correction Approval are being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C. 20231, on August 6, 2002.

Dated August 6, 2002

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USA Patent Application
Martin Roos
Serial no.: 09/755,978
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OPERATING ARRANGEMENT
FOR A SLIDING DOOR
Examiner: Thomas Y. Ho
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ABSTRACT



Operating arrangement for a sliding door

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A system for operating a door lock (14) and a latching device (16), which can be arrested in a positive-locking manner, of a sliding door (10), said latching device preventing the sliding door (10) in its open position from sliding back. The operation of the door lock (14) and latching device (16) takes place mechanically via connecting elements, and the logical closing functions, are integrated in the door lock (14) which is situated remote from the door handles. In order to avoid very long connecting elements with cumulative tolerances, the connecting elements (22, 24) between the door handles and the door lock (14) have driver elements (40, 42) which act via a driven element (32, 44) on a connecting element (28) connected to the latching device (16).

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Page 6, please replace the paragraph beginning at line 11 with the following rewritten paragraph:

In fig. 2, the reversing device 26 is illustrated in an oblique view with the housing [28] 29 open. The housing [28] 29 consists of a housing body 30 manufactured from plastic and of a housing cover (not illustrated). A reversing lever 32 is rotably mounted about a pivot spindle 34 in the housing 30. Like the housing [28] 29, the reversing lever 32 is manufactured from plastic.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1, 2, 5, 8, 9 and 10 as follows.

1.(twice amended) An operating arrangement for a sliding door (10), [in particular of motor vehicles,] having a door lock (14), a latching device (16) which can be arrested in a positive-locking manner and is for holding

the sliding door (10) in its open position, and an inside door operating means (18) having an inside door handle, and an outside door operating means (20) having an outside door handle, and connecting elements (22, 24, 28), the door lock (14) and the latching device (16) being able to be operated mechanically by the door handles via said connecting elements (22, 24, 28), and logical functions for locking/unlocking the sliding door (10) being realized in the door lock (14), and driver elements (40, 42), wherein the connecting elements (22, 24) between the two door handles and the door lock (14) have said driver elements (40, 42) which act via a driven element (32, 44) on the connecting element (28) connected to the latching device (16).

2. (twice amended) The operating arrangement as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least for said two door handles, separate ones of said connecting elements (22, 24) and said driver elements (40, 42) are provided, the latter interacting with [a single] said driven element (32, 44).

5. (twice amended) The operating arrangement as claimed in claim 1, wherein the driver elements (40, 42) are uncoupled from the connecting element (28) to the latching device (16) such that driving only takes place in a direction of movement of the driver elements relative to [one another] the connecting element (28).

8. (twice amended) The operating arrangement as claimed in claim 7, wherein said Bowden cables (22, 24) of the connecting elements from the door handles are continuous in a region of the driver elements (40, 42), and Bowden-cable sheaths (36) being omitted in said region.

9. (twice amended) [The operating arrangement as claimed in claim 8, wherein] An operating arrangement for a sliding door (10), having a door lock (14), a latching device (16) which can be arrested in a positive-locking manner and is for holding the sliding door (10) in its open position, and an inside door operating means (18) having an inside door handle, and an outside door operating means (20) having an outside door handle, and connecting elements (22, 24, 28), the door lock (14) and the latching device (16) being able to be operated mechanically by the door handles via said connecting elements (22, 24, 28), and logical functions for locking/unlocking the sliding door (10) being realized in the door lock (14), and driver elements (40, 42), wherein the connecting elements (22, 24) between the two door handles and the door lock (14) have said driver elements (40, 42) which act via a driven element (32, 44) on the connecting element (28) connected to the latching device (16):

wherein the connecting elements (22, 24, 28) are at least partially formed as Bowden cables, and said Bowden cables (22, 24) of the connecting elements from the door handles are continuous in a region of the driver elements (40,

42), and Bowden-cable sheaths (36) being omitted in said region;
and

Bowden-cable sheaths (36) of the door-handle connecting elements (22, 24) end molded onto walls of a housing body (30) on which the reversing lever (32) is pivotably mounted.

10. (twice amended) The operating arrangement as claimed in claim 9, wherein said housing body (30) is of [essentially] substantially mirror-symmetrical formation.